

What is this systematic review about?

Antenatal steroids, compared with placebo or no treatment, given to pregnant women at risk of giving birth before 37 weeks.

What evidence did we find?

27 randomised trials including 11,272 women



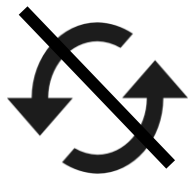
15 trials: singleton pregnancies only

12 trials: included multiple pregnancies



10 trials: from middle- and lower-income countries

17 studies: high-income countries



19 studies: used a single course of steroids

8 studies: used either single course or repeated doses

What are the effects of antenatal corticosteroids?

For babies: high-certainty evidence



- 2.3% fewer perinatal deaths
- 2.6% fewer neonatal deaths
- 4.3% fewer cases of respiratory distress syndrome

Little to no difference in birthweight

For babies: moderate-certainty evidence



- 1.4% fewer cases of intraventricular haemorrhage

For mothers: moderate-certainty evidence



Probably little to no difference in:

- Maternal deaths
- Chorioamnionitis
- Endometritis

What does this mean?



A single course of antenatal steroids **reduces the risk of serious respiratory illness and death** in neonates in low-middle- and high-income countries.



More detailed data are needed for certain high-risk groups (e.g. multiple pregnancies, pregnant women with diabetes or hypertension).

Evidence up to date: Sept 2020